



December 22, 2016

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), during the past several legislative sessions, was asked to submit a report of its outreach efforts to work with community rehabilitation program providers for job placement and retention services for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities.

SF 2323 states: *For purposes of optimizing the job placement of individuals with disabilities, the division shall make its best efforts to work with community rehabilitation program providers for job placement and retention services for individuals with significant disabilities and most significant disabilities. By January 15, 2017, the division shall submit a written report to the general assembly on the division's outreach efforts with community rehabilitation program providers.*

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has continued efforts to establish, create and maintain partnerships with Iowa Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) in 2016. IVRS continued efforts to promote and encourage collaboration by reaching out to Community Rehabilitation Programs, external vendors and other service providers. The result of this focus has contributed positively to enhancing partnerships, in addition to expanding competitive, community employment-related options for Iowans with disabilities. IVRS is the lead agency for the federal monies received from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy. During the past four years, Iowa has received technical and financial assistance dollars that have been directed to community provider transformation to support individuals with the most significant disabilities access community, competitive, integrated employment.

During 2016, IVRS expenditures paid to Community Rehabilitation Providers totaled \$2.371 million. Occupational Skill Training Programs continue to increase providing options for individuals with disabilities across the state to access meaningful opportunities to improve employment skills. Our CRPs are integral to the success of these training efforts to meet the business skill gap. IVRS provided financial support to 25 different Occupational Skills training programs which included Walgreens REDI trainings and Project Search programs.

IVRS made a variety of in-service, webinar, onsite and video conference training opportunities available to CRPs throughout the year, as well as data specific to each partner. Vendor data is shared annually by IVRS with providers to stimulate conversations with partners, ensure consistent business practices, promote transparency for purchased services, and provide a statewide basis for comparisons and quality assurance improvement. IVRS also reported specific outcomes from the Occupational Skill Training Programs being provided by the Community Rehabilitation partners.

IVRS will continue to partner and proactively respond to the demands of an ever-changing job market to fulfill our mission and effectively provide the necessary services to help individuals with disabilities achieve full integration into community employment. Towards this end, IVRS has put forth a dedicated effort to expand opportunities to collaborate, innovate and network with entities and leverage resources with community partners. With the implementation of the federal legislation, Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act, it is vital to align service delivery efforts, avoid duplication and leverage funding to maximize the capacity of all employment service providers to meet the needs of Iowans with disabilities.

January – March 2016:

- ✓ Revised contracts to allow Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) to be paid under a fee-for-service structure to align employment rates with Iowa Medicaid Enterprise.
- ✓ Executed new contracts to 81 Community Rehabilitation Programs for employment services.
- ✓ Provided outreach to Jefferson IVRS staff and community partners in that area.
- ✓ Attended Board meeting at Access 2 Independence Center for Independent Living in Iowa City.
- ✓ Facilitated conversations between IVRS, Managed Care Organizations and community partners to refine processes and discuss capacity issues.
- ✓ Hosted the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment meeting with over 70 community partners who were provided an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by administrative staff from IVRS and Workforce.
- ✓ Traveled to discuss service rates with IVRS staff and CRPs in and around Iowa City.
- ✓ Attended quarterly Mental Health Planning Council Meetings and participated in Mental Health Disability Services Commission meetings bi-annually.
- ✓ Provided ZOOM meeting to community partners to review regulations pertaining to students under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- ✓ Attended Board meeting at the Illinois/Iowa Center for Independent Living in Rock Island, IL.
- ✓ Reviewed plans submitted by 15 regions to ensure that counties recognize the importance of integration and alignment with core partners under WIOA.
- ✓ Attended Board meeting at the Center for Independent Living in Des Moines.
- ✓ Extended contracts to two community partners for Project Search in Clinton and North Scott to expand training opportunities in the healthcare field for students.

April – June 2016:

- ✓ IVRS was represented at the Iowa Association of Community Providers two-day meeting.
- ✓ Hosted a meeting with representatives from LifeLong Links to provide an update on various initiatives occurring at the state and federal level.
- ✓ Provided an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act at the Money Follows the Person spring gathering.
- ✓ Attended an exploratory Project Search meeting in Ames to discuss partnership possibilities to support this program in conjunction with Arc of Story County, Iowa State University and Progress Industries.
- ✓ Made connections with Iowa's three Managed Care Organizations and shared contact information with staff and provider agencies.
- ✓ Represented IVRS at the *Recruit/Train/Retain* training sponsored by the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment to share current practices and responsibilities required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- ✓ Shared information about IVRS at the State Educators' Audiology conference with over 55 participants.
- ✓ Approved Project Search and attended *Information Night* in Ames with parents and potential participants in partnership with Arc of Story County and Iowa State University personnel.
- ✓ Approved two additional Occupational Skills training programs from Goodwill of the Heartland for the Burlington area.
- ✓ Participated in a biannual joint meeting between the Mental Health Planning Council and Mental Health and Disabilities Services Commission.
- ✓ Attended a Board meeting at the Disability Resource Center for the Siouxland in Sioux City.
- ✓ Presented the Employment First vision to attendees at the Department on Aging and Disability conference.
- ✓ Participated in state planning for Independent Living with Independent Living Council members.
- ✓ Traveled to Ottumwa to meet with that area's Employment First Committee, including community and mental health service providers, managed care staff and South Central Behavioral Health Region's CEO.
- ✓ Participated in a statewide Project Search meeting with all 12 current projects in Iowa – eleven of which are funded by IVRS.
- ✓ Finalized input awarding conditional approval for local plans submitted by regions as part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act with representatives from Education, Workforce and the Iowa Department for the Blind.
- ✓ Represented IVRS at the quarterly Money Follows the Person meeting, at which time information was shared about *Positive Behavioral Supports* training, telework, and capacity building.
- ✓ Met with representatives from *Pursuit of Independence* to discuss IVRS employment services and move this CRP partnerships forward.

July – September 2016:

- ✓ Discussed the new settings rule and integrated worksites to initiate a potential Memorandum of Agreement between IVRS and /DHSIME.
- ✓ Completed a programmatic review of Access 2 Independence Center for Independent Living in Iowa City.
- ✓ Provided webinar training on Supported Employment Services to partners under contract with IVRS.
- ✓ Attended the Statewide Independent Living Council meeting to discuss specific goals that address outreach to unserved and underserved populations.
- ✓ Connected with Iowa's Employment Network Development Consultant from the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program (TTW) to discuss Partnership Plus agreements and the process for handing off a TTW beneficiary to community partners.
- ✓ Participated with Iowa Medicaid Enterprise via webinar about the settings rule and employment changes with regional staff.
- ✓ Facilitated four webinars with Subject Matter Experts under the Employment First Leadership State Mentoring Project to provide information and recommendations for service delivery to targeted IVRS partners.
- ✓ Presented a face-to-face training on Customized Employment and Discovery services to a variety of IVRS partners and staff.
- ✓ Issued a grant proposal to expand Intermediary Networks at Community Colleges to assist in preparing students for the workforce by connecting business and the educational system and offering relevant work-based learning activities to students and teachers.
- ✓ Trained 36 staff to provide Benefits Planning services, along with representatives from five Workforce offices across the state.
- ✓ Attended the Iowa Association of Persons Supporting Employment First annual conference to promote Employment First initiatives.
- ✓ Met with representatives from *Southern Iowa Rehabilitation Facility* to discuss partnership opportunities.
- ✓ Participated in webinar training that involved a review of employment services administrative rules with staff from the Department of Human Services for representatives from Iowa's eastern region.
- ✓ Provided webinar training through the IVRS Community of Practice for staff and community partners (including Managed Care and Case Management representatives) on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 511 and limitations on the use of subminimum wage.
- ✓ Discussed partnership opportunities with *Friendship Ark Homes* in Ames.
- ✓ Shared information with Fort Dodge staff and Community Rehabilitation partners at Genesis CRP.
- ✓ Approved the Walgreens Retail for Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) training for New Perspectives, Inc. CRP.
- ✓ Hosted a two-day visit from State Employment Leadership Network representatives to review Iowa's progress with employment rates and services.
- ✓ Attended Board meeting at League of Human Dignity in Lincoln, NE.

July – September 2016, continued

- ✓ Participated in Iowa Community Conversation on Disability and Aging Advocacy to reinforce collaborative efforts and address issues impacting service provision.
- ✓ Represented IVRS on the Iowa Able board and reviewed loan policies and 2017 budgets.
- ✓ Explored a proposed partnership between IVRS and Healing Hearts, Inc. for services to help individuals remain in their home, as well as animal therapy.
- ✓ Hosted ZOOM meeting for staff and partners in Dubuque.
- ✓ Approved funding services for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities at Northwestern College in Orange City, IA.
- ✓ Discuss partnership opportunities with *The Homestead* in Des Moines.
- ✓ Approved funding services for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities at Bethel College in MN.
- ✓ Discussed partnership opportunities with The Village, a potential CRP in Iowa City.
- ✓ Collaborated with staff from the Center for Disability and Development about Autism initiatives.

October – December 2016

- ✓ Refined the Iowa Guidebook for case managers, care coordinators and integrated health home care coordinators on WIOA to include new requirements for documentation.
- ✓ Hosted a follow-up meeting between IVRS, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment, DHS/Iowa Medicaid Enterprise and case management staff to review employment rules.
- ✓ Represented IVRS at Money Follows the Person meeting to discuss responsibilities under WIOA.
- ✓ Executed 14 Partnership Plus agreements to Employment Networks in Iowa, most of which are CRPs.
- ✓ Participated in the Statewide Independent Living Council meeting.
- ✓ Attended meetings between IVRS and Community partners to discuss new contracting processes, service rates, roles, expectations, etc.
- ✓ Traveled to Oskaloosa to meet with staff and attend a board meeting at the South Central Iowa Center for Independent Living.
- ✓ Attended a statewide transportation meeting to discuss service needs and integration efforts for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Participated in the Able Act training.
- ✓ Provided information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to a variety of audiences between Oct. – Nov. including face-to-face meetings or webinars for/with the following:
 - 1) The Iowa Coalition for Community Providers quarterly meeting
 - 2) The Iowa Association of Community Providers at their statewide meeting
 - 3) Money Follows the Person fall meeting
 - 4) Polk County Regional meeting
 - 5) Community Provider GoToMeeting™ with over 200 participants

October – December 2016, continued

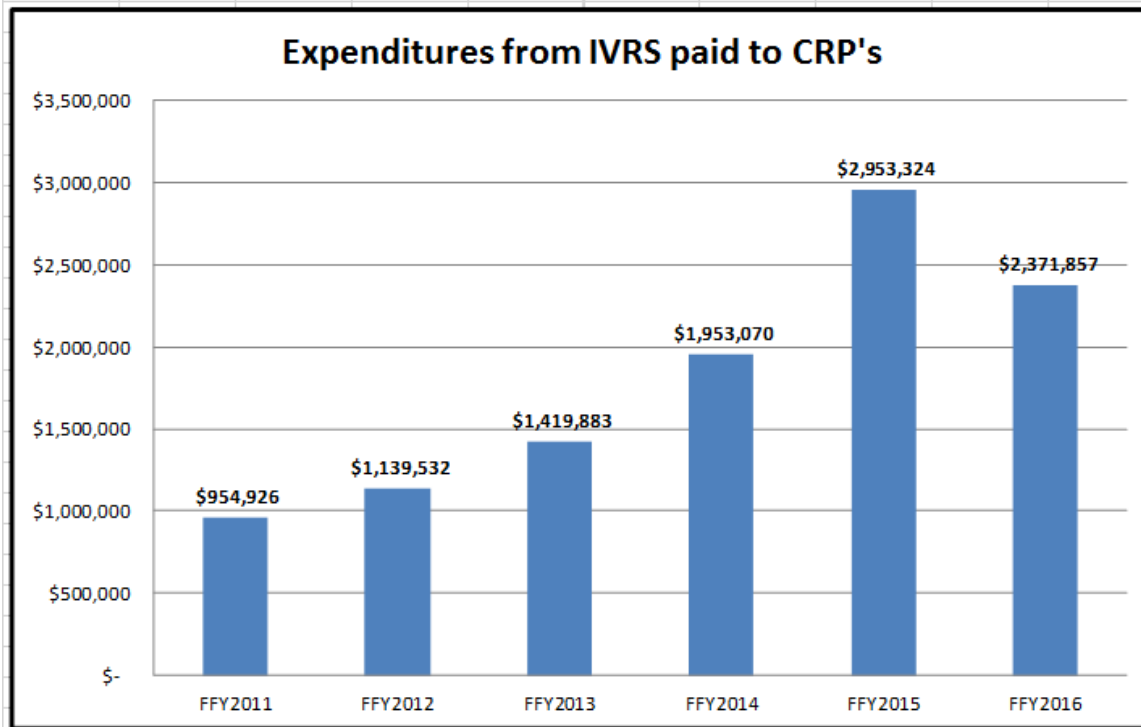
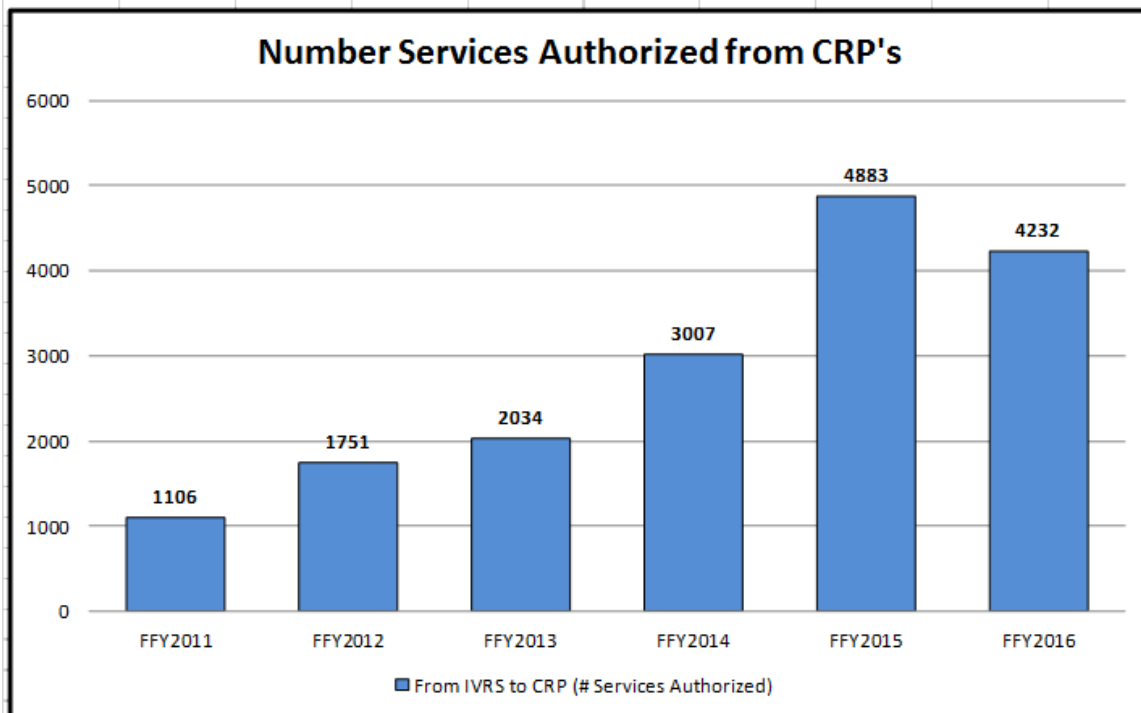
- ✓ Awarded grants to 14 community colleges responding to the proposal initiated by IVRS to increase capacity for work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Responsibilities under this grant involve developing and leading initiatives and projects that create robust partnerships with regional K-12 school districts, businesses, industries, organizations, and other community partnerships to enhance career-awareness, work-site based learning opportunities, and early career connections and opportunities within the college's service area for students with disabilities.

Community colleges receiving this grant include:

1. Northeast Iowa Community College (Area I)
2. North Iowa Area Community College (Area II)
3. Iowa Lakes Community College (Area III)
4. Northwest Iowa Community College (Area IV)
5. Iowa Central Community College (Area V)
6. Iowa Valley Community College District (Area VI)
7. Hawkeye Community College (Area VII)
8. Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (Area IX)
9. Kirkwood Community College (Area X)
10. Des Moines Area Community College (Area XI)
11. Western Iowa Tech Community College (Area XII)
12. Southwestern Community College (Area XIV)
13. Indian Hills Community College (Area XV)
14. Southeastern Community College (Area XVI)

Supported Employment							
	Avg # 18-6	Ending # of 18-6 as of 09-30	# of JC's Received SES	# of Services Performed	Amount Expended	Avg Expended	# SES Closures
2014	425	535	427	1,088	\$ 969,499	\$ 891	252
2015	665	861	675	1,746	\$ 1,493,834	\$ 856	333
2016	937	1061	581	1,199	\$ 1,088,528	\$ 908	382

Working Relationship between Iowa Vocation Rehabilitation Services and Community Rehabilitation Providers



Respectfully submitted,

David L. Mitchell, M.S., CRC
IVRS Administrator